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ABSTRACT

Designed to be integrated into a regular language arts curriculum in grades 1-3, the program begins with a review of the recent history of elementary second language programs in the United States and a discussion of the direction the movement might take in the 1980s. Research done on nonintensive, nonbilingual second language programs in the past 25 years is outlined, with a discussion of two types of benefits derived from early language programs: cognitive and attitudinal. The learning theories of Montessori and Piaget and other more recent research findings concerning young children's language learning capacity in relation to their psychological and physiological development are presented and discussed as a framework for the second language program approach proposed here. The elements of this approach are presented in the form of curricular guidelines, including recommendations for five language skill areas (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and culture) based on theories of children's cognitive development and using media and activities familiar to children from the regular language arts curriculum. (MSE)

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A FLES PROGRAM FOR GRADES 1-3: A
NON-INTENSIVE, NON-FOREIGN APPROACH

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts at George Mason University.

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ABSTRACT

A FLES PROGRAM GRADES 1-3:
A NON-INTENSIVE, NON-FOREIGN
APPROACH

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In this time of renewed interest in the implementation of foreign language programs in American elementary schools, there is a need to evaluate what the recent history of the movement has been and in what direction it might go in the 1980's. The first chapter of this work addresses this issue.

After the historical frame of reference is established, a discussion of research done on FLES programs in the past twenty-five years is presented. The benefits derived from early language programs are divided into two areas: cognitive and attitudinal. Also included is an evaluation of young children's language learning ability conducted in 1983. The main hypothesis of this survey is that a foreign language program is a valid addition to the elementary school curriculum.

An analysis of the learning theories of Montessori and

Piaget is made in Chapter Three. Other more recent research findings concerning young children's language - learning capacity are also included. This discussion serves as a framework for the curriculum guidelines suggested in the last chapter.

These guidelines are presented for the teaching of foreign language in Grades 1-3. This approach is called a non-foreign, non-intensive second language program integrated into the regular language arts curriculum. Recommendations are made for each of the five language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and culture.

INTRODUCTION

In light of the present rebirth of interest in foreign language study at the elementary school level, the purpose of this thesis is an analysis of Foreign Language in the Elementary School Programs better known by the acronym FLES. Conclusions are made for the development of a program with a new approach for grades 1-3.

The first chapter discusses the history of the FLES movement in the United States, and includes recommendations based on the 1981 report of the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) entitled: Elementary School Foreign Language Instruction in the United States: Innovative Approaches for the 1980's.

The second chapter reviews the benefits of early language learning. A survey of research conducted on FLES programs in the past twenty-five years is taken. Only research done on American non-intensive and non-bilingual FLES programs is considered. Early studies of Oneto (1968) and Vocolo (1967) as well as the more recent evaluations of Hancock (1976) and Di Pietro (1979) are discussed. A 1983 evaluation of young children's retention of foreign language skills conducted by the author of this thesis is included.

The third chapter analyzes the nature of the young child. It deals with both the child's psychological and physiological development. The theories of Montessori and Piaget are outlined in relation to these developments. Recent research findings on language learning, including studies conducted by Penfield, Lenneberg, and Krashen are also discussed.

The fourth chapter of the work sets forth elements for a new approach to the FLES program in grades 1-3. This is called a "non-foreign" approach. Included are curriculum guidelines formulated on theories of the young child's cognitive development. This approach is a topical one based on sequential development in language. It is child-centered, dealing with the "here and now" interests of the child. The program combining the components of the regular language arts class, addresses the five basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and culture. In doing so, it uses mediums and activities the child is already familiar with in his regular language curriculum. The major aims of this FLES program are to develop standard everyday vocabulary, to foster in the child a positive attitude toward language and language learning, and to create empathy towards the foreign people and their culture.

CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORY OF THE FLES MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

The history of the FLES program in the United States can be divided into four stages: Pre-World War I, 1920-1958, 1958-1979, and 1979 to the present. Although the term FLES is relatively new, having been coined in the 1950's, the concept of teaching foreign language in American elementary schools goes back to the early colonies.

Instruction in foreign language has been available to children in our country since shortly after the establishment of the first permanent English colony in 1607 at Jamestown. The Latin grammar school flourished in the colonies in the seventeenth century. Latin and Greek were the major languages taught in these schools with some French, Spanish, and Dutch taught also.

In the eighteenth century, the academy, a new kind of school, was conceived by Benjamin Franklin. Included in its curriculum was the study of many more subjects than in the Latin grammar schools, especially the study of modern languages. Franklin believed that "...it would be wiser for any student to begin with the modern languages and then

proceed to the ancient ones."¹ The academy movement soon became accepted throughout the colonies. It prospered in the early 1800's and reached its peak in 1850. By that date, there were 6,000 academies. According to Donoghue in Foreign Language and the Elementary School Child, the academy served an important function: "It served to bridge the gap between the Latin School of the seventeenth century and the high school of the nineteenth century."² As a result, the nineteenth-century high school offered Latin and Greek as well as French and German.

Foreign languages were first taught to young children in church schools. The earliest of these church schools taught German in Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1702. It was in order to compete with these German church schools that on May 19, 1840, Ohio passed a law that made it "...the duty of the Board of Trustees and Visitors of common schools to provide a number of German schools under some duly qualified teachers for the instruction of such youth as desired to learn the German language or the German and English language together."³ This law marked the introduction of foreign language instruction in the American elementary free public school system as an optional subject. Cincinnati was the first city to offer German in the grades. Thus, FLES was born.

In the decades preceding World War I, the Cincinnati

program served as a model for other FLES programs. New York, Saint Louis, Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbus, Buffalo, Denver, Dayton, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Boston, Saint Paul, and San Francisco all established successful FLES programs offering German and French to their students.

The earliest notation of Spanish in the elementary school was recorded in a 1915 New Mexican state law which provided for instruction if the majority of the school board approved. Some Polish and Italian programs were documented in Cincinnati in 1913.

With the rapid growth of foreign language teaching in elementary and high schools, two professional organizations concerned themselves with the study of modern foreign languages. The Modern Language Association (MLA) was founded by thirty-two teachers at Columbia University in December 1883. In 1882-83, the National Education Association's Committee of Ten reported: "We believe that children should, if possible, begin their study of French or German by the time they are ten years old."⁴

An account of enrollment in German in United States public schools between 1840 and 1919 is provided in Table 1 below. In Cincinnati in 1914, the enrollment in German FLES classes was reported to be 14,649 while in 1918, the enrollment dropped to just 7,000. This significant drop is accounted for by the negative effect that World War I had on

Table 1. Sample Annual FLES Enrollments

Place	Program begun in	Conjectured life of program (years)	Enroll- ment	Year
Cincinnati	1840	79	14,649	1914
			13,800	1916
			7,000	1918
New York	1854	65	21,005	1873
			4,675	1877
			11,026	1885
			26,632	1895
St. Louis	1864 (-1888)	24	450	1864
			2,000	1868
Chicago	1865	54		
Indianapolis	1869	50	3,096	1895
			6,699	1901
			6,963	1902
			6,501	1909
			8,161	1916
Cleveland	1870	49	5,146	1875
San Francisco	1871	20	3,068	1871
			2,806	1878
			1,627	1888
Baltimore	1874	45		
Boston	1895	5	656	1896
			1,013	1897
			1,281	1915
Buffalo			10,590	1912
Columbus			2,122	1882
Dayton				
Denver			7,000	1867
Milwaukee			35,849	1917
Total enrollment			203,815	
Average annual enrollment per program			8,152	
Average annual enrollment for 14 programs			114,128	
Average life of 9 programs		43		
Estimated total FLES enrollments (1840-1919)			4,907,504	
Estimated minimum persons affected (1840-1919)			1,000,000	

Source: Composite figures taken from E. W. Bagster-Collins, "History of Modern Language Teaching in the United States"; Frances H. Ellis, "Historical Account of German Instruction in the Public Schools of Indianapolis, 1869-1919"; and Charles H. Handchin, The Teaching of Modern Languages in the United States, in Theodore Andersson, Foreign Languages in the Elementary School: A Struggle Against Mediocrity (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p. 61.

foreign language learning, especially the study of German. Negative public reaction was so intense in the Indianapolis area that Commissioner Clarence E. Crippin introduced a resolution on January 29, 1918, which stated: "Whereas, a state of war exists between the Government of the United States and the Imperial Government of Germany, and in consequence thereof...parents of pupils have expressed a desire that the teaching of the German language be discontinued...."⁵ Public hysteria during and after World War I ended most of the FLES programs in the United States. Stage I of the history of FLES was completed. In his book, Foreign Languages in the Elementary School: A Struggle Against Mediocrity, Andersson estimates the overall enrollment in FLES programs in the United States between 1840 and 1920 to be a minimum of one million students. He writes: "Only after the passage of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 did FLES enrollments reach a point of being four to five times as large, relatively, as in the earlier period."⁶

After World War I, disillusioned and war-weary Americans adopted an isolationist policy. This was reflected in FLES programs. Enthusiasm for FLES turned sour as Americans turned inward. Most states passed laws forbidding the teaching of foreign languages in their elementary schools. Laws were enforced vigorously. In Hamilton County, Nebraska on May 25, 1920, teacher Robert T. Meyer was arrested for teaching German

to a ten-year-old boy. Meyer was convicted and the Supreme Court of Nebraska upheld the decision in appeal. Anti-foreign language laws also came under attack in Iowa and Ohio. Finally, on February 23, 1923, the U. S. Supreme Court rendered a decision which declared all anti-foreign language laws null and void because they were found to be in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Justices stated:

It is well-known that proficiency in a foreign language seldom comes to one not instructed at an early age and experience shows that it is not injurious to the health, morals, or understanding of the ordinary child.⁷

In 1920, the territory of Hawaii also tried to pass legislation to forbid the instruction of foreign languages on the elementary school level. Finally, in 1949, after almost thirty years of court battles, the United States Supreme Court turned the case back on procedural grounds. It was not until five years after this last court hearing that Hawaiian children of primary school age were finally permitted to attend schools that offered foreign language instruction.

There were, however, at least two FLES programs that managed to thrive during this troubled time despite the odds against them. A model FLES program was set up in Cleveland by

the French educator Emile B. Sauzé, who was director of foreign languages in the Cleveland school system. It was under Sauzé's firm direction that the Cleveland program thrived. Another successful FLES program was started in 1931 in New York Public School 208 in Brooklyn. The success of this program to teach both French and Spanish was due to the spirit of Elsa Ebeling, the school's principal.

After World War II, we as a nation became aware that we could no longer maintain an isolationist view and we needed to prepare language specialists so that we could communicate effectively with our enemies as well as our allies. In response to this, a FLES program of superior quality was initiated in Somerville, New Jersey, in 1949. The program included instruction in both French and Spanish, and provided for continuity on both the junior and high school levels. An evaluation of the program was conducted in 1962. This was important because Somerville was one of the first programs to evaluate itself. In their evaluation report the committee concluded that:

The FLES pupil does as well as the non-FLES pupil in subjects other than language; the time and effort required by the FLES program apparently does not impede learning in other areas.

FLES pupils can advance at least one year in their high school language study without harmful effect. In fact, the students themselves would favor acceleration of a year and a half....⁸

A pilot study done by STACO, Statistical Consultants, was incorporated into this report. This impartial group reported: "...at Mid-term FLES students in a Spanish 3 class achieve[d] approximately ten percent higher than did other pupils in the traditional language pattern group even though the FLES students were one year younger."⁹

Another significant result of the evaluation was that: "...of 973 pupils enrolled in Language Two and 322 in Language Three, the FLES continuation was 47% and the non-FLES 24%."¹⁰

By the early 1950's, the need for FLES was realized. It needed leadership. According to Andersson, this leadership was furnished by Dr. Earl J. McGrath, the United States Commissioner of Education. McGrath asked permission to address the meeting of the Central States Modern Language Teachers Association in Saint Louis on May 3, 1952. In his address he said: "The social, the political, the international reasons for the study of language deserve the thoughtful consideration of all who determine the character of American education." He went on to propose "...that there be

complete consideration of the place of foreign language study¹¹ in American education."

McGrath organized the National Conference on the Role of Foreign Languages in American Schools held in Washington, D. C., on January 15 and 16, 1953. As Andersson notes, the conference "...stimulated much enthusiasm and expressed agreement with the Commissioner that educators should seek ways of introducing FLES programs where conditions were favorable."¹² In 1952, the Modern Language Association launched a Foreign Language Program. FLP, as it was called, was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation from 1952 until 1958. Kenneth W. Mildenberger, an assistant on this project, surveyed the status of FLES programs in the United States. The results of this survey are summarized in Table 2. In the three-year period between 1952 and 1955, the number of communities with FLES programs quadrupled. By 1955, an estimated one-quarter of a million children in public elementary schools were studying a foreign language.

In the late 1950's, the United States government began to play an active role in the development of foreign language programs in the elementary school. According to Andersson, the purpose of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA) was "...to help repair our deficiencies in the teaching of science, mathematics, and modern foreign languages. What is particularly significant...is the fact that this was

Table 2. Mildenberger FLES Surveys, 1953, 1954, 1955

Figure 1. In What Grades is FLES Begun?

Grades	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
1953	8	18	26	32	49	38	15
1954	26	37	29	63	87	53	33
1955	35	68	38	99	116	69	63
Totals	69	123	93	194	252	160	111

Figure 2. Number of Classes Per Week

Times	1	2	3	4	5
1953	16	45	34	1	75
1954	67	75	36	24	122
1955	74	92	61	17	176
Totals	157	212	131	42	373

Figure 3. Length of Lessons

Minutes Per Week	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	60	75	90
1953	0	3	32	42	15	52	5	9	6	5	10	0	0
1954	0	6	61	72	22	94	4	18	16	13	26	1	1
1955	2	12	87	100	26	115	6	13	20	20	18	0	1
Totals	2	21	180	214	63	261	15	40	42	38	54	1	2

Source: Kenneth W. Mildenberger, "Status of Foreign Language Study in American Elementary Schools, Fall Term 1953, 1954, 1955," Washington, 1954, 1955, 1956. (Mimeographed.), in Andersson, p. 98.

first recognition in peacetime that our ability to communicate with other people in their languages is a matter of national self-interest and security." ¹³ Andersson reports that only months after the passage of NDEA, every state had a FLES program. Thus, it is with the passage of this legislation that we can date the beginning of Stage III in the development of FLES.

In addition to the NDEA, there was the passage of the Economic Opportunity Act (1964), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Higher Education Act (1965), the International Education Act (1966), the Education Professions Development Act (1967), the Elementary and Secondary Education Amendment and the Bilingual Education Act (1968). All of these measures renewed interest in the study of foreign languages and were an impetus to FLES.

Model programs during the late 1950's and early 1960's included a "French Experiment" in York, Pennsylvania, which grew out of an educational workshop and led to the involvement of the townspeople and exchanges of official visits between York and Arles, the twin city in the south of France. The program not only affected the schools but involved the entire community. In fact, the mayor of Arles married one of the York assistants.

Another model program was set up in Hackensack, New Jersey, in 1955. The success of this program rested on the planned articulation from elementary to the junior and senior high schools, and on a series of precise curriculum guides. From grade nine through grade twelve, these FLES students followed a special course of study which was completely distinct from the four-year sequence followed by those students who begin Spanish in high school.

An experimental program for selected children was begun in New York City in 1957. The program began in grade four and was completely audio-lingual at that level. Reading and writing were introduced in the fifth grade. The program included instruction in French, Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew. An effort was made by the New York Board of Examiners to test teachers licensed in the elementary school for foreign language competency. These FLES teachers were assisted by foreign language experts. As a result of this project, excellent syllabi for the guidance of FLES teachers were written for French, Spanish, and Italian Grades 4-5-6.

In Bellevue, Washington, an effective FLES program was begun in 1959. It flourished for a while but was discontinued. The primary reason given for its failure was the cost of expanding the program. The tax burden had become exceedingly heavy in a residential area with no industry to share the cost of funding the project.

A FLES program was started in Beverly Hills, California in 1960. French and Spanish were taught from grade one in a well-planned twelve-year sequence. (An unpublished evaluation of this program prepared by James E. Bruno of The University of California at Los Angeles in 1976 is discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.)

In 1959-1960, the Modern Language Association again

surveyed FLES and commented on its rapid growth: "This growth may indicate that FLES has passed the experimental stage and is destined to become a regular part of the elementary school curriculum...."¹⁴

In the five years between 1956 and 1961, the spread of FLES programs was dramatic but, as Andersson¹⁵ reported, the improvement in quality did not keep pace.

Because of the critical shortage of qualified teachers created by the rapidly expanding FLES programs, television as a medium for foreign language instruction was considered in the late 1950's and early 1960's. In 1963, Anne Slack and Jacqueline Gadoury of the MLA staff conducted on-site surveys of eighteen areas using the instructional television show "Parlons Français." They concluded that the program "...provides an effective means for teaching French -not alone, but in conjunction with classroom follow-up practice conducted by skilled teachers."¹⁶

Televised classroom instruction in a foreign language without classroom practice is ineffective, stated their report. Could the use of instructional television relieve the critical shortage of teachers? Perhaps the remarks of J. Richard Reid of Clark University summed it up best when he stated: "Television is not the answer to the shortage of teachers, but insofar as teaching of foreign languages is done by skillful, inspired teachers backed by sound advice from linguists and producers, and by a sound program in the schools, television can be a

major part of the solution to this problem."¹⁷ Television, however, could not solve all the problems of the FLES programs.

By the mid-1960's, interest in FLES began to wane. There were many causes for this phenomenon. Myriam Met, in her article "The Rebirth of Foreign Languages in the Elementary School", mentions several of these causes. The lack of language teachers who were also qualified to teach elementary school, the lack of quality instructional materials, and failure to plan for articulation between the elementary school programs were all major problems. Added to these problems was the fact that "...the furor of the post-Sputnik era over the inadequacy of the American educational system lost its momentum, [and] public concern with language learning and government financial support of language programs diminished."¹⁸

In 1976, a survey of state language supervisors conducted by Adcock reported that "FLES...is an almost completely defunct creature."¹⁹ Two years later, Neel reported that "...17 of 23 state foreign language coordinators indicated that FLES had either disappeared or significantly declined in the recent past."²⁰

In 1979, the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies issued a report that provided the

impetus for a revival of interest in FLES. According to a 1984 CAL report, the President's Commission "...underscored the need for foreign language studies....[and]...specifically recommended that such study begin in the elementary school and continue through the student's educational experience."²¹ Thus, we can date 1979 as the beginning of the present stage in the history of the FLES movement in the United States.

In response to this renewed interest, CAL has issued two reports: Elementary School Foreign Language Instruction in the United States: Innovative Approaches for the 1980's (1981) and Comparative Evaluation of Elementary School Foreign Language Programs: Final Report (1984). In addition to these reports, a book, Foreign Language in the Elementary School: A Practical Guide was also published by CAL. It serves as a guide for those parents, educators and administrators who want to initiate FLES programs.

In defining these FLES programs the 1981 CAL report stated that the "Revitalized FLES programs of the 1980's are those that have classes up to five times a week either before, during, or after school. They are called 'revitalized' because they take a different approach than the traditional FLES programs of the 1950's and 1960's."²² This new approach emphasizes conversational and communicative skills as well as cultural awareness. Rhodes, the co-author of the 1981 and

1984 reports, sees the new FLES programs of the 1980's setting more realistic goals and trying innovative approaches.²³ For this reason, both CAL reports include information about total and partial immersion as well as bilingual and Foreign Language Experience (FLEX) programs.

In a partial immersion program, part of the total curriculum is taught in the second language. In a total immersion plan, all of the regular curriculum is taught in the second language except for English which is taught as a foreign language. Bilingual aides are provided for each teacher and the children are encouraged to read and write first in their mother tongue in the bilingual approach. The FLEX program provides the children with a sampling of Latin, French, Spanish, and German so that they will be better able to determine which of the languages they want to study.

In 1981, CAL conducted an eight-state survey of foreign language programs throughout the country in an effort to gather material on all types of programs. CAL representatives conducted on-site visits at eighteen schools. Of these eighteen, five successful and innovative FLES extracurricular programs were visited. They were: Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Beverly Hills, California; Corpus Christi, Texas; Fairfax, Virginia; and Lexington, Massachusetts. As a result of this survey, a report was issued in 1981, under the sponsorship of

the United States Department of Education.

The 1981 report listed eight recommendations for FLES programs. They were:

1. Definition of goals. It is essential that each program's goals be clearly defined so there are no misunderstandings concerning the level of foreign language proficiency and cultural awareness the children reach.

2. Articulation. Elementary foreign language programs with long-range goals should place priority on the process of articulation from elementary to secondary school for their students.

3. Language Assessment. Achievement tests can be used to assess language proficiency, and subject-content proficiency, and to determine placement in the appropriate track.

4. Program Administration and Cost. It is critical that schools designate qualified personnel to administer the foreign language program. Positions include supervisory personnel, resource personnel to work directly with the teachers, curriculum writers, and, if possible, art, music, and physical education teachers proficient in a foreign language.

5. Parent and Administration Support. Support of both parents and administrators is essential to the success of any foreign language program.

6. Resource Materials. Currently, schools have very few texts in foreign languages to choose from, and do much of their own materials. Non-immersion programs also have difficulty in obtaining texts, partly because foreign language textbook

publishers have not yet realized the extent of the market for elementary school materials.

7. Teachers. Universities should be encouraged to prepare teachers to work in elementary school language programs. Only a few states that we (CAL) are aware of (Texas, Louisiana, and California) offer courses for elementary foreign language certification.

8. Supplemental Classroom Activities. Programs with before- or after- school classes or other non-immersion classes find it very beneficial to have regular classroom teachers reinforce cultural or language aspects that are taught in language class. It is important for the students to sense their teacher's interest and support of their foreign language study.²⁴

It is to the sixth recommendation that this thesis addresses itself: that which deals with the development of practical and pedagogologically sound teaching materials and texts. If the revitalized FLES programs are to be successful and enduring, educators and textbook writers must work together to develop viable standardized teaching materials. There seems to be a particular need for these materials on the primary level, that is, for Grades 1-3.

NOTES

¹ Mildred R. Donoghue, Foreign Language and the Elementary School Child (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1968), p. 338.

² Donoghue, p. 336.

³ Bagster-Collins, E. W. "History of Modern Language Teaching in the United States," in Studies in Modern Language Teaching: Reports Prepared for the Modern Foreign Language Study and the Canadian Committee on Modern Languages, Vol. XXVII (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), cited in Theodore Andersson, Foreign Languages in the Elementary School: A Struggle Against Mediocrity (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), pp. 59-60.

⁴ Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies (Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1894), in Donoghue, p. 347.

Frances H. Ellis, "Historical Account of German Instruction," The Indiana Magazine of History, Vol. L, No. 2 (1954), in Andersson, p. 77.

⁶ Andersson, p. 65.

⁷ Meyer v. State of Nebraska, 262 U. S. 390, 43 S. Ct. 625, 67 L. Ed. 1042, 29 A. L. R. 1446.

⁸ Somerville Public Schools, Evaluation of the Effects of

Foreign Language Study in the Elementary School upon Achievement in the High School (NDEA Title VI Research Project Number SAE 9516), in Andersson, p. 92.

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Earl J. McGrath, "Language Study and World Affairs," Modern Language Journal, Vol. XXXVI, No. 5 (1952), in Andersson, p. 94.

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Marjorie Breunig, Reports of Surveys and Studies in the Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages, 1959-1961 (New York: MLA, 1961), in Andersson, p. 102.

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Myriam Met, "The Rebirth of Foreign Languages in the Elementary School," Educational Leadership, Vol. 37, No. 4 (1980), 321.

¹⁹
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1981), p. 4.

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Rhodes, p. 4.

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Nancy Rhodes et al., Comparative Evaluation of Elementary School Foreign Language Programs: Final Report (Washington, D. C.: United States Department of Education, International Research and Studies Program, 1984), p. 2.

22

Rhodes (1981), p. 11.

23

Personal interview with Nancy Rhodes, CAL, Washington, D. C., February 24, 1984.

24

Rhodes (1981), pp. 42-46.

CHAPTER TWO

JUSTIFICATION FOR FLES PROGRAMS

Is there a justification for a FLES program? The belief that children make better language learners has been supported by conflicting, meager research and by anecdotal evidence at best. If this is the case, should FLES be revitalized especially in these times of rising costs and educational budget cuts? Perhaps second language learning ought to be left in the junior and senior high schools so as not to clutter an already intense elementary school curriculum. The emphasis of this chapter is to seek justification for the FLES program by surveying research findings on the subject.

This report deals only with research concerning FLES programs, those programs in which a foreign language is taught before, after, or during school classes, with emphasis on conversational and cultural awareness. Results of evaluations of this type of program cannot be compared to those of evaluations done on intensive bilingual or partial and total immersion programs. The reason for this was made clear in a comparison of foreign language programs discussed in the 1984 CAL report. As a basis for evaluation, the MLA test

for language proficiency was administered to students enrolled in FLES, partial and total immersion courses in different communities across the United States. The test consisted of four subtests: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The results of the evaluation were that the immersion students performed at levels significantly higher in all skills than FLES students. It was also found that children in the total immersion programs performed higher on each skill than both partial immersion and FLES students. The length of time devoted to the study of the foreign language was the determining factor in the evaluation. Time was inversely related to achievement on the MLA tests.

This discussion is limited further to those studies conducted on American FLES programs, even though this will eliminate some very impressive research conducted in Canada (Lambert, Tucker, and d'Anglejan)¹ and England (Stern, Burnstall)²³). The favorable effect these reports have had on our own FLES program is undeniable. It is unfair, however, to compare these programs set in quite different social, economic, and political environments to those in the United States.

A survey of research meeting the criteria set as a part of this thesis for FLES programs conducted in the last twenty-five years shows that the effects of FLES can be divided into

two broad areas: cognitive benefits and attitudinal benefits. The cognitive benefits are those that affect the students' academic achievement not only on the elementary school level, but also into the high school and university levels. These effects can be measured both by the acquisition of language skills and by the overall academic performance in other curriculum areas. These benefits apply to the students' thinking skills, whereas the attitudinal benefits refer to the students' emotional and psychological development. A discussion of research in both these areas follows.

During the 1960's, one of the questions present in the researcher's mind was: what effect, if any, would the learning of foreign languages in the elementary school have on achievement in the same language in high school? Both Joseph Vocolo and Alfred Oneto addressed this question.

The more comprehensive of these two studies was conducted by Vocolo in 1967. His study comprised an evaluation of FLES and non-FLES high school students in three Buffalo, New York, area schools. The experimental group consisted of thirty-one ninth grade students who had had the FLES sequence through grades five to eight, and were now enrolled in the intermediate level of French. The control or non-FLES group was also on the intermediate level in French. The groups were matched closely in terms of intelligence, academic achievement, and socio-economic level. Each group was

composed of an equal number of boys and girls. The same three teachers worked with each group so as to insure that the instruction for both groups would be as similar as possible. The teachers themselves were unaware of the background of the students.

The MLA-Cooperative French Test was used to measure academic achievement. The test measured the four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each test was scored three times, first by the individual teacher, then by the Director of Foreign Languages, and lastly by the group as a whole. The results of the test are presented in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3
MEAN SCORES ON MLA FRENCH TESTS, FOR FLES AND NON-FLES
STUDENTS IN THE VOCOLO STUDY (1967)

Measure	FLES	Non-FLES
Number	31	31
Mean IQ	127	126.2
Mean G.P.A. (Grade Point Average)	91	90.7
Listening	30.7	26.2
Speaking	53.5	43.0
Reading	38.1	35.1
Writing	63.5	50.2

Source: Joseph M. Vocolo, "The Effect of Foreign Language Study in the Elementary School Upon Achievement in the Same Foreign Language in the High School," The Modern Language Journal, LI, No. 8 (1967), 469.

Vocolo concluded that these results indicate a significant superiority of the FLES group in listening, speaking, and writing. There was no significant difference in reading indicated.⁴

These results are supported by a similar study done in 1968 by Oneto. He conducted an evaluation of FLES and non-FLES high school students in the Fairfield, Connecticut school system. The instrument of evaluation was the MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Test as was used in Vocolo's study. Although there were several instances where both FLES and non-FLES students had the same teacher, a major uncontrolled variable was teacher skill. Oneto concluded that: "Pupils who begin continuous study of a foreign language in grade three can achieve, in most instances, significantly greater skill in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding the language than their peers who begin language study in high school."⁵

Studies were also conducted to determine if the time taken away from other curriculum areas to teach FLES had an adverse effect on the students. In answer to this question, an experiment was conducted from 1960 to 1963 by the public schools of St. Paul, Minnesota.⁶ It involved 4,611 pupils in grades four, five, and six. Six schools were selected for the experimental or FLES group. Both groups were closely comparable in all other aspects. The FLES group had Spanish every day for fifteen minutes, this time being deleted from

the times normally allotted to social studies, language arts, or math. Reading was considered too vital a subject to permit deletion. The standardized measuring instruments used were the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the Stanford Social Studies Test, and the Otis Beta Intelligence Test. No detrimental effect upon measured achievement was found in the subject areas from which time was taken.

The results of a similar study done in Champaign, Illinois, in 1963⁷ found that the FLES group not only showed no detrimental effect on achievement, but actually reported a greater achievement in reading vocabulary and reading comprehension in English than did the non-FLES pupils.

A more recent evaluation was conducted by Di Pietro during the 1977 Spring semester at the Key Elementary School in Arlington, Virginia. The study involved children in grades one through six. The languages chosen were Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese because these three languages reflected the influence of the three largest minority groups in the community. The language instruction took place during the third and fourth quarters of the academic year, lasting a total of fourteen weeks. The courses were offered to all students, native and non-native. English-speaking mainstream children were placed in the language class of their choice. Non-English-speaking children were evaluated with the Bilingual Syntax Measure and placed according to their

abilities. The non-native Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese children were placed in classes where English was taught as a second language. This situation represents a variant in our study. Therefore, the results of testing done on the English-speaking students enrolled in Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese as a second language experience are the only valid results pertaining to this survey.

The native English-speaking children were given the MOORE Reading Test. Of the thirty native speakers, sixteen registered improvements in post-test scores, ten registered no change, and only four showed a drop in scores. Di Pietro reported that: "...our data from the MOORE pre-and post-tests at the Key Elementary School clearly show vast improvements in English reading skills of children, native and non-native alike."⁸

In addition, the effect of the language classes on overall academic performance was also determined. The grades from two report card periods were compared in a random sample of forty report cards. The sample represented a cross-section of the children involved in the study. Of the nineteen English-speaking pupils sampled, the grades of sixteen improved, two went down, and one registered no change.

Perhaps the most interesting study done to date on the subject was reported in 1973 by Richard Landry. He theorized that "...the experience of learning a second language at the

elementary school level is positively correlated to divergent thinking in figural tasks." ⁹ The study compared the development of figural fluency and flexibility of elementary school children who study a second language with that of children who are monolingual. Two urban elementary schools were paired for this project. One had a FLES program, the other did not. The schools drew from the same socio-economic group, primarily lower middle income. Only native English-speaking children were included in the study. Divergent thinking was measured by the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking. As defined by Landry, divergent thinking is "...the kind of thinking that goes off in different directions. It makes possible changes of direction in problem solving and leads to a diversity of response when more than one answer may be acceptable." ¹⁰ The results of the report appear in Table 4 below.

Landry concluded, then, that foreign language did foster and facilitate the development of better divergent thinking as measured by the degree of figural fluency and flexibility.

The second area of concern for FLES studies has been the effects of foreign language learning on the attitudes of the pupils involved in the program. One of the findings of the Dunkel and Pillet Study (1962) ¹¹ was that pupils involved with language study in the elementary school were more interested in continuing language study in the upper grades.

TABLE 4
MEANS ADJUSTED FOR TWO COVARIATES (AGE AND IQ) AND
STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR RANDOM SAMPLE IN THE LANDRY
STUDY 1973

	Figural Fluency		Figural Flexibility	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Boys Monolingual	19.378	7.671	16.123	4.643
Girls Monolingual	18.759	6.756	14.877	3.151
Boys Bilingual	23.895	8.298	18.525	5.755
Girls Bilingual	21.454	7.652	16.183	5.055

Source: Richard Landry, "The Enhancement of Figural Creativity Through Second Language Learning at the Elementary Level," Foreign Language Annals, (October, 1973), p. 114.

Donoghue (1965)¹² reported that FLES taught in a cultural setting created more positive attitudes towards the people whose language is studied. Hancock, Lipton, and Baslaw (1976) designed a study to determine and compare the attitudes of sixth graders studying French towards the study of foreign language in general. The investigation included 300 sixth graders from eight different schools in Queens, New York. A French Opinion Questionnaire was used as the instrument of assessment. The responses were analyzed by computer. The

authors found it noteworthy that "...50% of the FLES students reported a positive attitude towards the necessity of learning a FL. This figure is contrasted with 21.9% of the total non-FLES pupils."¹³

The report of Di Pietro (1977) on the Key Elementary School experiment found that not only did language instruction have a positive effect on overall academic achievement, but also attitudinal changes were documented. Di Pietro stated that "...the language instructors felt that their students' general interest in schoolwork increased as the language classes continued."¹⁴ This was reflected in the data collected on absences and tardiness. Unfortunately, data for both native and non-native students studying language was taken collectively, with the result that attitudinal changes among the native English-speaking students as a separate group were not documented.

The most dramatic difference was recorded for attendance. During the non-FLES quarter, 163 students were absent collectively for 922 days. However, during the FLES quarter, the same students were absent collectively only 674 days. As for the change in tardiness, the change was much less dramatic. This researcher notes that this positive attitude towards school also reflects a change in attitude on the part of the parents. It is, after all, the responsibility of the parent to determine if a child should stay home and to get the

child ready for school on time. Perhaps an area for further evaluation would be to study the effect of FLES programs such as the one at Key Elementary on the attitude of the parents whose children are involved.

Bruno (1976) evaluated the Beverly Hills Foreign Language Program devoting attention especially to the FLES program. His conclusions were not in accordance with those recorded in this discussion. He wrote: "On the average, FLES shows no relationship...to students taking more foreign language classes, does not result in higher grades in high school foreign language study when controlling for student ability, and students and graduates feel the foreign language program needs improvement."¹⁵ In spite of his findings, Bruno did recommend that the program be redesigned and not abandoned.

In order to ascertain the retention of certain aspects of the FLES class by children in elementary school, the author of this thesis conducted an informal evaluation of first, second, and third grade students who had been involved in a French FLES program during the 1982-83 school year. All of the students involved in the study attended White Oaks Elementary School in Burke, Virginia. Because all of the students lived in the same neighborhood, it can be concluded that they were basically all from the same socio-economic background. The students had been enrolled in two semesters of language study. The first semester was conducted over a 10-week period, the

second over an 8-week period. Class was held twice a week either before or after school, equalling a total of 36 lessons. The teaching materials and curriculum were the same for all classes.

The criteria set in selection of students for the study were: they were to have had no prior knowledge of French either formally or at home; they were to have been in first, second, or third grade during the 1982-83 school year; they were to have had the same teacher for both semesters. Of the ten students who met the criteria, three had been first graders, two second graders, and three third graders. The two other students who met the criteria had moved away from the area during the summer vacation. One of the first graders was eliminated from the study because she had missed 16 of the 36 lessons due to illness. The children could not prepare for the evaluation because they had no idea that they were to be evaluated. The evaluation was conducted in September 1983, four months after their last French lesson the preceding May. Each child was evaluated privately and individually.

The evaluation instrument was teacher-made. (See the Appendix for a sample.) The object of the evaluation was to test retention in four of the five language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and culture. It was not appropriate to evaluate the writing skill because only writing readiness activities had been included in the course of study.

French orthography is not phonetic, and formal writing should consequently be delayed longer than for the more phonetically written languages.

The listening skill was measured in two ways. First, the child was asked to play a sort of "Simon says." The teacher gave the command and the student responded with the corresponding gesture. This game had been played regularly in class. The second part was an audio-discrimination test. The child was presented with a chart on which were written nine numerals between 1 and 50. The teacher picked a numeral at random and read it aloud twice. The student was instructed to point to the correct numeral. There were sixteen items in this part.

The speaking evaluation was also divided into two parts: natural conversation and rote memorization. The child was asked his name and a question about his family in the first part. To evaluate rote memory retention, the student was asked to recite "Les Jours de la Semaine," a nonsense poem, and also sing along with a tape recording of "D'où venez-vous Perrine?", a song they had learned. Because of the subjective nature of this part, percentages were assigned according to whether none, some, many, or almost all of the rote memory items were recalled.

In the reading section of the study, the child was asked to perform three tasks. First, he was asked to read a list of

ten French vocabulary words. Second, he was asked to read a simple paragraph about a family. Third, the child was given a work sheet and eight crayons. The work sheet had eight lollipops drawn on it, with the French color name written on each lollipop stick. The child was instructed to put an "X" in each lollipop using the color indicated by the color word written on the stick.

The cultural skill was evaluated by asking the child to identify two visuals, one of the outline of the map of France, the other of the Eiffel Tower.

The results of this study are presented in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 below.

Although this evaluation is based on a small sampling, it nonetheless appears that the most significant difference in performance was made between grades one and two. The learning curve took the greatest rise in Listening, Speaking, and Reading skills and seemed to reach a plateau between second and third grades. The slight increase shown for the second grade can be attributed to the fact that an unusually talented language learner was in the second grade group.

The greatest difference in the learning curve can be seen in Figures 1 and 2 representing the Listening and Speaking Skills. This indicates that these skills require more time to develop and might be linked to social maturity.

The figure that represents cultural awareness shows that

FIGURE 1
LISTENING COMPETENCE

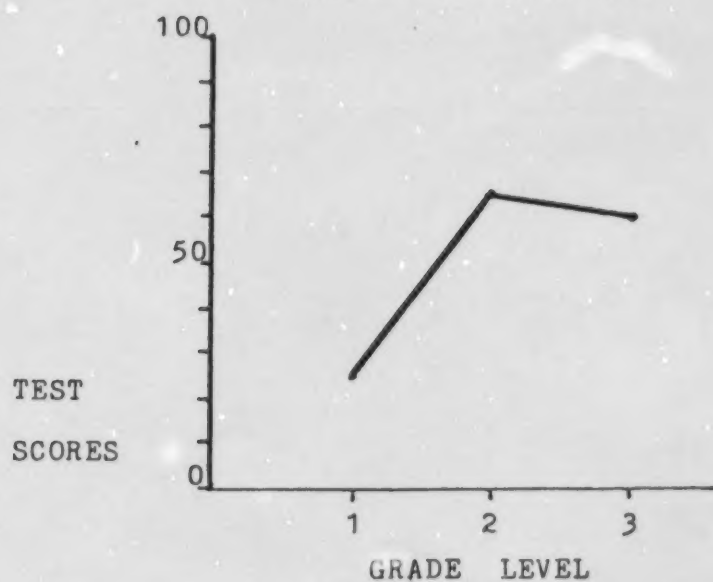


FIGURE 2
SPEAKING COMPETENCE

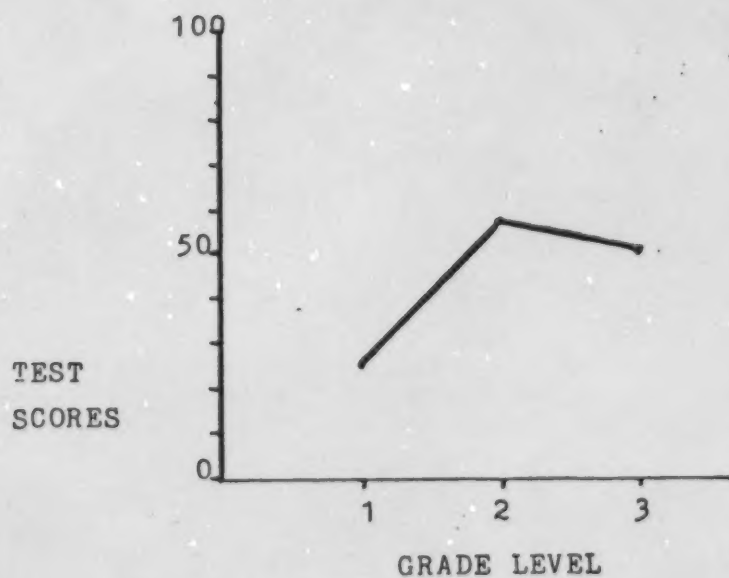


FIGURE 3
READING COMPETENCE

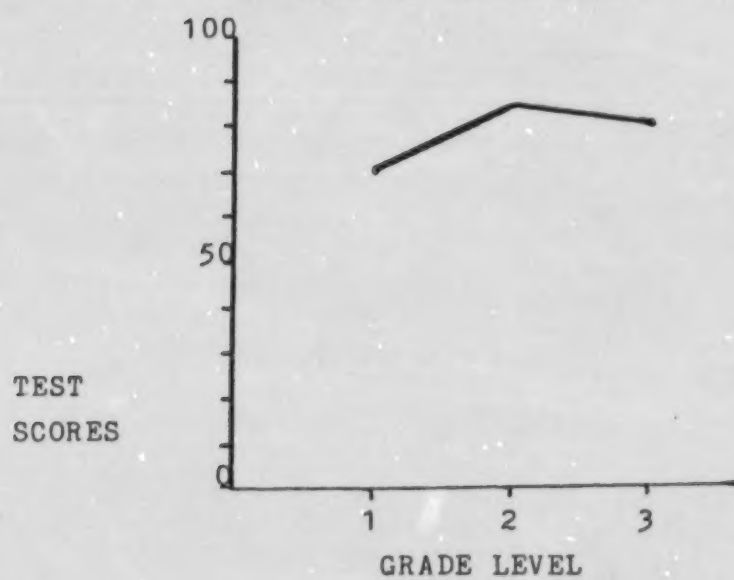
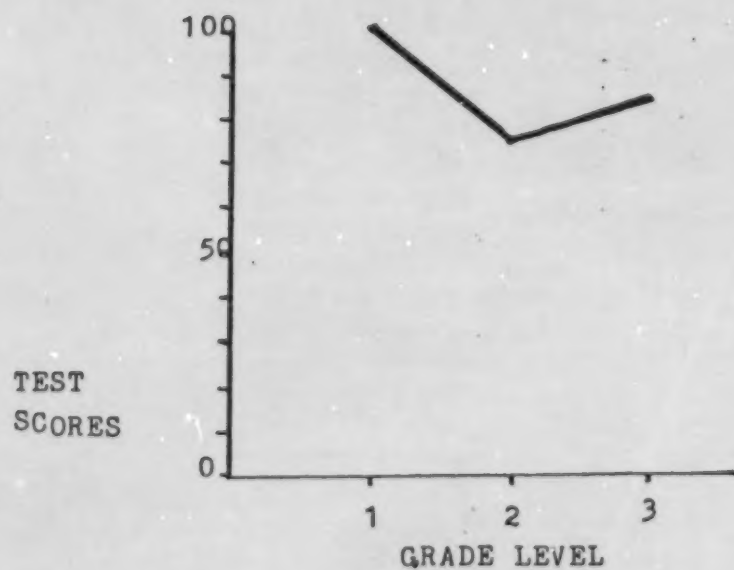


FIGURE 4
CULTURAL AWARENESS



age is inversely related to identification of visuals. Perhaps this suggests that the younger learner is better able to link information to visual stimuli.

The skill that reflects the least significant difference is reading. Perhaps this fact can be accounted for by the emphasis placed on reading skills in the regular language arts program.

If attitude can be linked to attendance as was shown in Di Pietro's 1977 study, then it can be said that this experimental group showed a strong interest in foreign language study. With the exception of the child eliminated due to frequent illness, the average attendance was 32.8 days out of 36. This represented an excellent effort to attend language class in spite of inclement weather conditions, holidays and spring sport commitments. In many cases, if a student was unable to attend an afternoon class, the child made it up in the morning session and vice versa. This represented an extra effort and interest on the parents' part because it was their responsibility to get their children there early or pick them up late.

Finally, this informal evaluation leads us to conclude that young children can learn a second language and do retain an average of 64 1/2% of the work even after a four-month layoff. Therefore, second-language instruction may well be a legitimate addition to the early elementary school

curriculum in grades 1-3.

There is clearly a need for further study of this issue especially in light of the renewed interest in FLES. However, the limited amount of research already conducted on past FLES programs demonstrates that the benefits of this type of early language program are undeniable. There is no doubt that there is a valid justification for FLES.

NOTES

¹
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²
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³
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⁴
Joseph M. Vocolo, "The Effect of Foreign Language Study in the Elementary School Upon Achievement in the Same Foreign Language in the High School," Modern Language Journal, Vol. LI, No. 8 (1967), 469.

⁵
Alfred Oneto, comp. FLES Evaluation: Language Skills and Pupil Attitudes in the Fairfield, Connecticut Public Schools (Hartford: Connecticut State Department of Education, 1968), p. 11.

⁶
See Mildred Donoghue, "What Research Tells Us About the Effects of FLES," Hispania, Vol. XLVIII, No. 3 (1965), 555-58.

⁷
Donoghue.

8

Robert J. Di Pietro, "Filling the Elementary School Curriculum with Languages: What Are the Effects?" Modern Language Journal, Vol. 63 (1979), 194.

9

Richard Landry, "The Enhancement of Figural Creativity Through Second Language Learning at the Elementary School Level," Foreign Language Annals, Vol. 7 (1973), p. 111.

10

Landry, p. 114.

11

See Charles R. Hancock et al., "A Study of FLES and Non-FLES Attitudes Towards the Study of French," The French Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 5 (1976).

12

See Hancock (1976).

13

Hancock, p. 720.

14

Di Pietro, p. 197.

15

James E. Bruno, "FLES Progress Report." Presented to the Beverly Hills Board of Education, 1975. (Unpublished) pp. 31-32.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING ABILITY OF THE CHILD

FLES teachers and curriculum designers must understand how children develop and learn so as to provide language learning experiences that are in keeping with their specialized needs and interests. Not to consider these would not only do the children a serious disservice, but also would doom the program from its inception. Children in the first three grades of elementary school are quite different from the junior and senior high school students for whom most language learning programs have been designed. This chapter proposes to discuss the nature of these children and their language learning capabilities. These observations are based on the established theories of Maria Montessori and Jean Piaget, as well as on other more recent theories of young children's language acquisition.

Children between the ages of six and nine enjoy running, jumping, skipping, and climbing. They seem to be constantly in motion. Although by this age they have a high degree of large muscle coordination, the development of their small muscle dexterity is still incomplete. Eye and hand

coordination is not perfected either. This is a period of rapid physical growth. The bony structure is getting stronger and their endurance is building. Because of their increasing physical coordination and large expanding vocabulary, they are beginning to develop socially. They enjoy group play and organized games. They are natural mimics and love to be involved in dramatic play.

Their thinking is grounded in the concrete. They cannot grasp verbal symbolic abstractions. Young learners are naturally curious about their environment but need concrete experiences to give meaning to their learning experience. Although not as self-centered as younger children, they are interested only in the "here and now" experiences they can relate to themselves. Their goals are immediate. Because they are so energetic and vivacious, they tire easily and a teacher needs to plan a good balance of quiet and active activities. Although these children are beginning to understand cause-and-effect relationships and reason, this process is hampered by the fact that their attention spans remain so short.

Two individuals who have had a profound influence on child development theory are Montessori and Piaget. It is on the ideas of these twentieth-century pioneers that current language arts programs are based. It is ironic indeed that

neither Montessori nor Piaget began work in the field of education or educational psychology. Both were led to this field purely by chance. Yet, Montessori has been regarded as perhaps the single most important educational theorist of this century, and Piaget's work on the various stages in the cognitive development of the child has become an indispensable guide to modern educators and curriculum planners. Surely, no discussion of curriculum planning for young learners would be complete without a review of Montessori's and Piaget's theories on children and their learning abilities, especially their capacity for language learning.

Montessori was a young Italian doctor who became very interested in what was then called "scientific pedagogy." Her interest in the education of young children sprang from her work as an assistant doctor in the mental clinic at the University of Rome where she had become quite intrigued with the training of mentally afflicted children. The idea that medicine and teaching were linked was one of the novel theories of the time. Montessori explained, "...I began a really profound study of the so-called curative pedagogy, and consequently I wanted to understand the study of normal¹ teaching and the principles on which it is founded."

Montessori based her ideas on her own observations and those of Itard and Séguin. Itard's classic work, Des Premiers

Développements du Jeune Sauvage de l'Aveyron, traces the extraordinary education of a man-idiot raised in a state of savagery. Séguin's Traitement Moral, Hygiène et Education des Idiots and a second edition written in the United States twenty years later, Idiocy and its Treatment by the Psychological Method, were also important influences.

It was on January 6, 1907, that Montessori opened the first "Children's House" in the San Lorenzo section of Rome. Under the auspices of the government, this project was to provide low-cost housing for Rome's poor, and a sort of childcare center for its children ages three to six. In 1948, Montessori wrote that the "...social and pedagogic importance of such an institution became apparent to me at once in all its greatness and I indulged in what seemed to be then exaggerated visions of its triumphal future; but today many are beginning to understand that I foresaw the truth."²

The "truth" that Montessori foresaw was the potential learning capabilities of young children, heretofore ignored. In describing this phenomenon, Montessori explained that the "...child creates his own 'mental muscles', using for this what he finds in the world around him. We have named this type of mentality, 'The Absorbent Mind.'"³

In light of her observations, educators have been forced to take a new view of the role of the teacher, the child,

curriculum, and the learning environment on the early elementary school grade levels. On education and the teacher, Montessori said that "...education is not something which the teacher does, but it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being."⁴ If Montessori changed our expectations of the young learner, she also changed drastically our ideas on the role of the teacher. It was now our responsibility as teachers to create an environment conducive to learning, one in which children would "absorb" knowledge. The teacher was seen in a new light, not as an imparter of his or her own knowledge, but as a director of self-discovery for the child. As Montessori described, "There is no need for [the teacher's] words, her energy, her severity, but what is needed is wisdom, keen-eyed in observing, in serving, in approaching and in withdrawing, in speaking and in keeping silent, in accordance with the occasion and needs."⁵

Up until the early twentieth century, children were expected to remain motionless at their desks for the entire length of the school day because any physical movement was considered a distraction from the mental process. Montessori tried to dispel this myth. She believed that exercise "...ought always to be at the services of the mind, and [students] should not abdicate in order to make themselves

servants of the material part of the nutritive life in what is called the 'physical life'.⁶ Mental work ought to be accompanied by movement. Montessori students learned by doing. They manipulated button boards, banners, sets of glasses which contained colored liquids, bells, cubes, baskets, rods, locks, keys, ribbons, laces, hooks, and buckles. When it was time for reading, Montessori developed a moveable alphabet. Some seventy years later, all these learning devices are still used in Montessori schools. It was her philosophy that "...individual activity is the one factor that stimulates and produces development and that this is not more true for the little ones of pre-school age than it is for the junior,⁷ middle, and upper school children." In her ideas and experiments, we see the seeds sown for Asher's theory of Total Physical Response in language learning.

Language learning was of particular interest to Montessori. She defined language as "an instrument of collective thought."⁸ Montessori felt that one of the miracles of life was that a child by the age of two could learn to produce its mother's tongue. She carefully charted the progress of language learning in the child from birth to the age of two years. She called this the "Explosive Epoch." It is at the age of two years that she observed an explosion of words and phrases. This phenomenon can be seen in the

early elementary school child who is learning his second language. Montessori theorized that the first words a child utters will be nouns, especially concrete ones. Action words and more complicated use of descriptors will come later. On the subject of grammar Montessori wrote that teachers "...must come to understand that the child reaches his knowledge of grammar by himself; but this is no reason for our not speaking to him grammatically or for not helping him with his sentences."⁹ She also concluded that "Grammar thus assumes a kind of 'constructive' function on the lines of an analysis, and is not, as is thought in ordinary methods, a kind of anatomy--a dismembering of speech into its parts in order to analyze it."¹⁰ All this was written by Montessori years before theories on transitional grammar became popularized.

In her observations, Montessori also noticed an "explosion in reading and writing" among her students. She linked the ability to read and write to the overall development of language. Reading in a Montessori environment started with the labeling of familiar concrete objects. The child recognized the meaning of the word he read and then placed the label beside the object it indicated. Next, action words or verbs were discovered by the child. Once the child could manage sentences, reading slips were prepared. These were "...brief, easy, and clear, and at the same time,

interesting, especially as they are also accompanied by motor activities, not of the hand only, but of the whole body.¹¹

To help the child read sentences, each part of the sentence was written in bright colors, a different color for each part of speech. Words were taught in groups of related sets. The child would learn new vocabulary that was related in context. Hundreds of labels were made and put in boxes. The children were permitted to choose and read the labels.

In speaking about foreign language learning, Montessori observed that "...children are interested in foreign words, and remember them in a surprising way during all the time employed in reproducing them with the moveable alphabet."¹²

On the subject of second language learning, she also wrote that a child has the inner machinery so that he can "...learn to perfection as many languages as he hears spoken about him."¹³ She concluded that this is the result of unconscious work. The child is a natural language acquirer. It is on this natural motivation and ability that our modern-day FLES programs for the early grades ought to be based.

Piaget's observations on the learning capability of young children were similar to those of Montessori. A contemporary of hers, his early interest was in biology. While still in high school, he published some important papers on mollusks. Early in his career, however, he abandoned this interest to

study child psychology. Hans Furth in his book Piaget for Teachers described Piaget as "...not primarily interested in education or, for that matter, in psychology. But he did focus and work indefatigably on the problem of knowing as no man ever did before him. He became a great psychologist and a great educator almost as a by-product of his principal philosophical interest."¹⁴

Like Montessori, Piaget recognized in the child a sort of unconscious learning mechanism. His theory "...starts with the functioning organism in adaptive contact with the world. This functioning manifests the organism's internal organization. Instead of a stimulus to which a response has to be initially associated, there is the organic, internal scheme of the infant."¹⁵ Piaget's ideas too had a profound influence on the role of the teacher, curriculum planning, and learning environment of young children.

If one agrees with Piaget's theory that intelligence grows from within rather than from without, one must see the role of the teacher in a much different light. Furth explained his interpretation of Piaget's view of education when he wrote that "...teachers would feel much more creative if we saw our role as coach or guide rather than as dispenser of goods."¹⁶ The teacher and school have the responsibility to create an environment in which children's innate

intelligence can develop. Like those of Montessori, Piaget's observations apply to all socio-economic levels and to all areas of instruction.

Manipulation was also of vital importance to Piaget as it related to the learning process. "In Piaget's terminology both the visual and the touch perceptions have to be assimilated and transformed into comparable schemes through which the identity of objects can be recognized. In other words, as Piaget frequently points out, an identity judgment is never just a simple recording of perceptual sameness,"¹⁷ Furth reported. Piaget envisioned a sort of "active school." Supporters of this type of school argued that little learning is retained in traditional schools where learning is on command. But a child who learns through "...free investigation and spontaneous effort will later be able to retain it; he will have acquired a methodology that can serve him for the rest of his life, which will stimulate his curiosity without the risk of exhausting it," said Piaget in his book To Understand Is to Invent.¹⁸ He continued, "...to understand is to discover, or reconstruct by rediscovery, and such conditions must be complied with if in the future individuals are to be formed who are capable of production and creativity and not repetition."¹⁹ The child, then, and not the school master, is in control of his intellectual destiny. He alone, working according to an internal mechanism, will

learn somewhat like Montessori's child "absorbs." We need only to provide the proper environment and guidance.

As a result of his study, Piaget devised a chart (See Table 5 below) of what he felt were the main stages of cognitive development and the approximate ages at which they appear. The ages represent averages and are not static. The important factor is that the development is continuous and children move from stage to stage building on each successive cognitive structure. The sequence is always the same.

TABLE 5
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD

Stage	Onset	Typical Activities
Sensorimotor	Birth	Perception, recognition, means-end coordination
Preoperational	1-2	Comprehension of functional relations, symbolic play
Concrete operational	6-7	In variant structures of classes, relations, numbers
Formal operational	11-13	Propositional and hypothetical thinking

Source: Hans Furth, Piaget for Teachers (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 33.

For the purpose of this discussion, we will focus on the Concrete Operational stage which begins at age six or seven and ends with the onset of the Formal Operational stage at age eleven to thirteen. This is precisely the stage of development of children in the elementary school grades first through third. Children at this stage of development are able to understand complex relationships such as structures of classes, quantity, weight, and volume, but cannot yet deal in abstractions. Abstract thinking ability is left to the Formal Operational stage. Knowledge of the cognitive ability of children is vital in the planning of curriculum and curriculum related activities.

According to Piaget's theories, the teacher must match a symbol-conceptual experience with a real instance in order that the young learner can internalize the information. Therefore, Piaget recommended sorting, classifying, and pattern recognition activities for this age.

Piaget urged teachers to surround their students with a rich language environment. He warned that linguistic and reading activities ought to be devised that will be conducive to thinking. He warned against any methods that "...may lead to a kind of verbalization of images, if they only foster associations without giving rise to genuine activities."²⁰ To Piaget, the cognitive development of the child preceded the linguistic achievement and was far more important. Piaget

went on to recommend that in the teaching of history, science, geography, and languages an active method be used. He explained that "...in every field knowledge of facts has no value except in relation to the processes of discovery that enable it to be absorbed."²¹ According to Piagetian theory, the teacher ought to devise linguistic activities that are conducive to thinking. In his discussion of the role of language and thinking, he suggested that "...linguistic play with phonemes and miscellaneous sounds, rhythms, and sing-song games help realize the basic arbitrariness of speech."²² Grammar rules are then learned implicitly by the child and not committed to memory formally as is the case with the older learner.

What Piaget suggested is that the needs of the young language learner are quite different from those of the adolescent learner. This has been proven time and again with the failure of those FLES programs for young children that were based on the use of high-school methodology. Educators must be aware that children's linguistic development is closely allied with development of their other mental abilities.

Montessori and Piaget were not the only ones to recognize the particular language learning abilities of young children. In the past twenty-five years, theories on children's language

learning abilities have been hotly debated.

The Canadian neurologist Penfield theorized that the young child's brain is "plastic." This quality gives him an unusual capacity for the learning of language. Penfield felt that it was only a short step from learning one's mother tongue, to the mastering of additional languages. In 1953, he wrote, "There is an age when the child has a remarkable capacity to utilize those areas of the brain for the learning of language, a time when several languages can be learned simultaneously as easily as one language."²³ However, he seemed to carry his assumptions too far when he concluded that learning a second language after puberty was physiologically near impossible.

In 1967, Lenneberg hypothesized about the specialized functions in the left and right sides of the brain. "Cerebral dominance" or "lateralization" begins in childhood. Lenneberg suggested that "...the ability of the organizer to subconsciously build up a new language system deteriorates after puberty, when the brain's left and right hemispheres have developed specialized functions."²⁴ According to Lenneberg, the potential for language learning is a function in both hemispheres of the brain of a young child, but shifts to just the left side at puberty. This argument for cerebral dominance has never been proven conclusively.

Herriot (1973) claimed that the study of the localization of language functions in particular parts of the brain was not valid. Instead, he proposed that during childhood the physiological function of the brain is sufficiently plastic to relearn language. Therefore, there are no specific mechanisms which are responsible for language acquisition. Braine (1971), Jakobovits (1970), Newmark and Reibel (1968) have all disputed Herriot's theory and suggest that while the young child has the ability to mimic foreign sounds accurately, the adult is better at learning vocabulary and grammar skills.

This position has been supported by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen in their book Language Two published in 1982. They contend that young children can acquire languages easily although they have no knowledge of linguistic rules. Adults, on the other hand, can understand and learn all the grammar rules of a language system and yet not be able to communicate in that language. The capacity to grasp abstract linguistic rules emerges around puberty. According to these authors, the "...ability to think abstractly about language, to conceptualize linguistic generalizations, to mentally manipulate abstract linguistic categories, in short, to construct or even understand a theory of a language, a grammar, may depend on those abilities that develop with formal operations."²⁵ In summary, then, young children can be said to acquire language while students past puberty seem to

make better learners. Educators must be made aware of these distinctions so that they can plan the proper approach.

At the Modern Language Association's meeting held in May 1956, the conferees drafted the following consensus on the subject:

The optimum age for the continuous learning of a second language seems to fall within the span of ages four through eight, with senior performance to be anticipated at ages eight, nine, ten. In this early period, the brain seems to have the greatest plasticity and specialized capacity needed for acquiring speech.

26

This concept is illustrated by Andersson in Figure 5 below.

Mildred Donoghue, a leading advocate of early language learning programs, gave some excellent reasons why language learning should be initiated in the first three grades of elementary school. These reasons which serve as a summary to our discussion of the merits of early language learning are:

1. The first language is not sufficiently imbedded to interfere with the learning of the second.

2. Children are very receptive to new motor or muscular skills and can imitate almost perfectly.

3. Language learning is a long-term process and an early start allows for that much additional practice.

4. An exclusively oral-aural approach, so necessary in the early stages of language work, seems natural and acceptable.

5. Foreign language is not a subject to these children but merely a class activity.

6. Language is language and children do not distinguish between first and second languages.

7. Children have no interest in analyzing a language.

8. Children have no urge to translate.

9. Children accept adult authority and desire the teacher's approval.

10. Songs and games are a large part of the day's schedule and can readily include songs and games in a second tongue.

11. The earlier the child is introduced to a foreign language, the better his pronunciation will be --other things being equal.

12. Success in foreign language study is inversely proportional to the age of beginning studies.

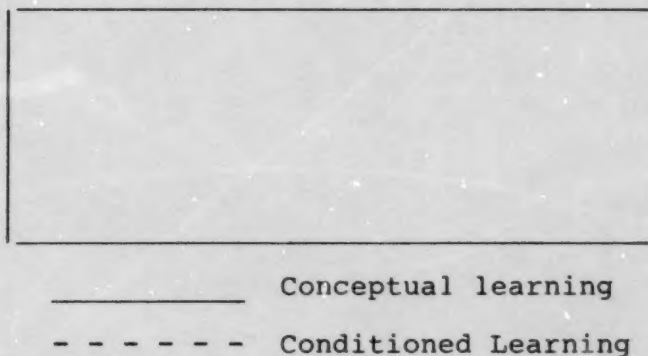
13. Foundations of social attitudes, prejudices, and interests are laid in the primary years, and monoglot experiences of the first decade may create barriers which are difficult to remove later.²⁷

However, all these advantages cannot be applied if valid

curriculum guidelines are not written or followed.

FIGURE 5

RELATIONSHIP OF LANGUAGE LEARNING TO AGE



Source: Theodore Andersson, "The Optimum Age for Beginning the Study of Modern Languages," International Review of Education, Vol. VI, No. 3 (1960), p. 303, in Andersson, Foreign Language in the Elementary School, p. 44.

NOTES

- ¹ Maria Montessori, The Discovery of the Child. Mary A. Johnstone, trans. (Adyar, India: Kalakshetra Publications, 1966), p. 25.
- ² Montessori, Discovery, p. 39.
- ³ Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind. Claude A. Claremont, trans. (Adyar, India: Vasanta Press, 1961), p. 25.
- ⁴ Montessori, Mind, p. 6.
- ⁵ Montessori, Discovery, p. 196.
- ⁶ Montessori, Discovery, p. 112.
- ⁷ Montessori, Mind, p. 6.
- ⁸ Montessori, Mind, p. 110.
- ⁹ Montessori, Mind, p. 125.
- ¹⁰ Maria Montessori, Childhood Education. A. M. Joosten, trans. (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1974), p. 133.
- ¹¹ Montessori, Childhood, p. 133.
- ¹² Montessori, Discovery, p. 323-24.
- ¹³ Montessori, Mind, p. 113.
- ¹⁴ Hans G. Furth, Piaget for Teachers (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 79.
- ¹⁵ Furth, p. 30.

- 16 Furth, p. 150.
- 17 Furth, p. 108.
- 18 Jean Piaget, To Understand Is to Invent: The Future of Education, George-Anne Roberts, trans. (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1973), p. 93.
- 19 Piaget, p. 20.
- 20 Piaget, pp. 7-8.
- 21 Piaget, p. 106.
- 22 Furth, p. 70.
- 23 Wilder G. Penfield, "A Consideration of the Neuro-physiological Mechanisms and Some Educational Consequences," Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, May 1953, in Theodore Andersson, Foreign Languages in the Elementary School: A Struggle Against Mediocrity (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p. 43.
- 24 Heidi Dulay, Marina Burt, and Stephen Krashen, Language Two (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 87.
- 25 Dulay, p. 61.
- 26 Modern Language Association, "Childhood and Second Language Learning," Proceedings of MLA Conference, May 1956, in Theodore Andersson, Foreign Languages in the Elementary School: A Struggle Against Mediocrity (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p. 45.
- 27 Mildred Donoghue, Foreign Language and the Elementary School Child (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown, 1968), pp. 237-38.

CHAPTER FOUR

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES FOR FLES GRADES 1-3

The failure to provide FLES teachers with adequate curriculum guides--those which provide sequential lessons and provide for articulation between the elementary grades through to the high school level--has always been a weakness of American FLES programs. In order to be valid, the development of such curriculum guides demands the interdisciplinary efforts of a language specialist, an elementary educator, and a social scientist. Such collaboration is both time-consuming and expensive. It is for this reason that most curriculum guides from the very inception of FLES programs in the United States have been locally produced. This is not to say that there have not been some very valid curriculum guides written in the over 140-year history of these programs. Some excellent material was prepared in Baltimore (1899), Milwaukee (1911), Los Angeles (1943), Somerville, New Jersey (1949), New York City (1964), and most recently Indiana (1981).

These works, however, met only local needs and in most areas, the FLES teacher has been left to her own devices.¹ The teacher must rely on individually prepared teaching

resources or adapt foreign materials to the American student. The need for the development of standardized curriculum guides is urgent. This point was emphasized in the 1981 report by the Center for Applied Linguistics entitled Elementary School Foreign Language Instruction in the United States: Innovative Approaches for the 1980's. The authors made the observation that "Non-immersion programs also have difficulty in obtaining texts, partly because foreign language textbook publishers have not yet realized the extent of the market for elementary school materials."² The success of the "revitalized" FLES programs of the 1980's will depend on the resolution of this problem. It is to this issue that the present chapter of this study is addressed.

Since the most neglected area of curriculum planning is material written exclusively for the FLES program in grades one through three, this thesis concerns itself with proposals in this area. These proposals are made in light of the most recent research in language acquisition and child development. This approach is called a "non-foreign, non-intensive, integrated approach to the teaching of foreign language."

According to Congressman Paul Simon of Illinois, a leading advocate of foreign language in the elementary school and the author of The Tongue-Tied American,³ the word foreign has an unpleasant connotation to Americans. Foreigners in

this country have long been considered an undesirable element. They represent that group of people who are forced to take menial and low-paying jobs. Likewise, the languages that they bring from their homelands are signs of that undesirability. For years, new Americans were forced to rid themselves of any "foreign-ness" and become "Americanized." Americans as a rule had no patience with anyone whose language was different from their own. Early immigrants made a conscious effort not to hand down to their children their rich language tradition. For these reasons, the study of a second language should be distinguished from that of a "foreign" language. Language, after all, is only a verbal code shared by a community of people bound together in the same culture. All groups have their own language: one is not more "foreign" than another. The languages simply represent different codes: in Saussurean linguistic terms, different signifiants for the same signifié. Therefore, the use of the descriptor "foreign" is inappropriate for instruction in a second language (referred to in this discussion as L_2).

"Non-intensive" refers to the type of FLES program which is an enrichment experience. In recent years, the trend has been towards experimentation with total and partial immersion language programs, as well as with bilingual programs. In a partial or total immersion plan, all or part of the total

school curriculum is taught in L₂ with instruction in English as the second language. In a bilingual environment, children entering elementary school are encouraged to learn to read and write in their native language before attempting to learn English. Although these are valid approaches for some special areas where the minority environment may warrant them, they do not represent realistic and practical applications for all areas of the United States. The "non-intensive" FLES program does represent a system which will "transport" well in all environments.

These proposed curriculum guidelines call for an integrated approach, that is, a program that makes the L₂ instruction an integral part of the regular language arts program. As was shown in chapter two, the study of a second language can actually strengthen the first. It is entirely appropriate, therefore, to integrate the study of L₂ with the regular English language arts activities. This approach also serves to deemphasize the "foreign-ness" of the second language. The curriculum guidelines proposed will suggest activities familiar to the child because they are used in the regular program. These activities will be based on solid early elementary educational theories and practices, those suggested in the previous chapter by Montessori and Piaget.

This curriculum guide represents all five areas of

language instruction: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and culture. These five skills should be in balance with each other; no one area should predominate, either in the overall view or within each individual lesson. The teacher should make an effort to include an activity for the reinforcement of each skill in each lesson. The foreign language profession has witnessed the failure of the audio-lingual approach of the 1960's which replaced the grammar-translation approach of the 1950's. Disaster occurred because each of these approaches represented a one-sided approach, the one emphasizing listening and speaking, the other emphasizing only reading and writing. The teaching of the cultural component as a "language skill" has been recognized as the fifth skill by many foreign language teachers. Nelson Brooks stated that "Language is not a book, nor a grammar, nor a dictionary. Language is certainly not writing; indeed it is not even words.... We may say that it is learned, systematic, symbolic vocal behavior; a culturally acquired, universal, and exclusive mark of man."⁴ A language teacher cannot merely teach words in a vacuum. Language must be taught in its cultural context. It is believed that this fifth skill is just as important as the other four because any attempt to teach a language without the cultural experience would be a sterile one indeed. In her recommendations for the new FLES

programs of the 1980's. Allen wrote that "A major thrust of FLES will be the development of cultural understandings as seen in contrast with the child's native culture."⁵

Another argument for a balance of the five language skills is the consideration of the "modality" of the child. "Modality" refers to each individual child's learning style. Some youngsters learn best by doing, some by verbalizing, some by hearing, and others by seeing. Most children have a predominant style which is reinforced by the others. A strict audio-lingual approach to language learning would certainly be detrimental to a child who was a visual learner. In an address to Fairfax County's Foreign Language Teachers at their in-service workshop on August 25, 1983, Altman urged foreign language teachers to be sensitive to the different learning styles of their students. Keeping a balance among speaking, listening, reading, writing, and culture will assure that the "modality" of all students will be accounted for.

As was discussed in chapter three of this study, the first- to third-grader has a short attention span and a constant change of focus and balance between active and passive activities is required. In planning for activities to focus on each of the five language skills, a teacher automatically insures changes in activities and tempo throughout each thirty or forty-five minute lesson. A teacher

should make a conscious effort to incorporate and balance all of the language skills. The lesson plan should reflect this arrangement. The use of a skeletal daily lesson plan with symbols representing each area will be an aid to insuring that this will be accomplished. A quick glance will tell the teacher in which of the areas the lesson might be deficient. This method is efficient and takes little extra planning time.

Quite often, the FLES teacher is a foreign language specialist who is an itinerant teacher. She floats from classroom to classroom within the same school or from school to school. Since this is usually the case, it is difficult to create a language environment. This does not lessen the fact that a learning environment rich in language and culture is essential to the learner. The FLES teacher must be especially sensitive to this problem and be resourceful in finding a solution. Since a FLES teacher does not always have her own wall space, bulletin board, or display area, setting up a moveable language corner is essential. The language corner can be a traveling one. It should contain those books, magazines, pictures, and realia that can fit into a large shopping bag or sack. It must be mobile enough to cart around from school to school. Its contents must be ever changing to meet the subject content of the lesson or unit. Students must be given time before, after, or during the lesson to examine

the contents and ask questions. Items included in the display must be integrated into the lesson either as a reinforcement of previously learned material, or as a motivation for further discussion. When young children become accustomed to this practice, they are anxious to see what surprises will emerge from the sack before each lesson. The sack itself becomes the motivating force.

Each of the five language skills will now be discussed at length and proposals will be made to insure that they be validly included in a course of instruction written to meet the needs of the young learner.

Listening

If a child is motivated by the teacher's enthusiasm, he will be inclined to listen "actively." An "active" listener is one who pays attention to the speaker and internalizes the message, that is, relates it to his or her own experience. To accomplish this, the teacher must be keenly aware of what her children's interests are. To aid her, she might have the children fill in cards answering questions about themselves on the first day. The teacher could change this exercise into a game-like interview for her younger students. This is particularly helpful for the itinerant FLES teacher who is not

in a school long enough to get to know her pupils. The information on the cards would be invaluable in planning future lessons. A student would be more interested in listening to a story in the second language about Johnny's terrier Tiger, than to one about a French poodle named Jacques. Or the teacher can announce that today the class will discuss Beth's favorite color.

If the French teacher finds that most of her students are interested in baseball and it is World Series time, she might create a listening exercise involving listening to a tape of a few innings of a Montréal Expos game. Basic vocabulary words can be introduced before the tape is played and the students can raise their hand every time they hear one of the key words. Of course, they cannot be expected to understand every word of the play-by-play, but by listening for the words, they are developing audio discrimination. This is also an excellent opportunity for the students to hear native speakers in a natural setting, one that they can relate to their own experiences. Again, data collected on each student can be an endless source of information to personalize lessons, capture the students' attention, and make them truly "active" listeners.

Young children like to be read to. This is no less true for a second language than it is for the first. Fairy tales

are an excellent source of listening material. Most children are familiar with the story lines, and fairy tales in each of the more common modern languages can be obtained from foreign language book publishers. Books with large, colorful illustrations and simple text are excellent. In a French class, for instance, a discussion of the works of Charles Perrault is very appropriate. As the "Father of the French Fairy Tale," his works are well known to American children. The children would be delighted to know that although there are over two hundred versions of Cinderella, Walt Disney chose to immortalize Perrault's version. Gathering the students around her in a semi-circle, a teacher could read the fairy tale aloud. The children are not expected to understand every word but they know the story line and can derive the meaning from the illustrations and the paralinguistic gestures of the reader. Tapes of these tales are also available from textbook companies. These can be lent out or left at school for the children to listen to when the teacher is not there.

Another type of listening exercise that young language learners ought to be exposed to is what is referred to in Language Two by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen as "motherese."⁶ Mothers or other caretakers of young children talk to them in the "here and now." They talk to the children in the present, and do not discuss what happened yesterday or what will happen

tomorrow. Children's needs are immediate. Young children in the target country are exposed to this type of chatter, and young American students ought to be exposed to this special language too. When the language teacher is getting her class ready for dismissal, she should continue chattering in the target language. For example, the French teacher might say: "Mes enfants, prenez vos manteaux." "Boutonnez vos chandails, il fait froid." "Attention Marie, ta mère arrive." The language lesson should not end with the last planned activity. It should continue until the children are out of hearing range so as to expose the children to this special "motherese." This provides another informal and natural listening experience.

Both Montessori and Piaget stressed the relationship between physical action and language learning. In the 1960's, Asher conducted experiments which aided the development of aural comprehension through what he called a "strategy of total physical response." His language learners were required to act out commands in the target language. It was Asher's contention that a language learner will "...internalize the code in the same way you assimilated your native language, which was through commands."⁷ The FLES teacher can easily use Asher's theory in class. Children love to play "Simon says". It can be adapted to the target language. Once the children

know the commands, they can play "Simon says" a few minutes of each class period. It offers a good change of pace and is a valuable listening exercise. The teacher will also know at a glance if a student is not grasping the material.

Speaking

A discussion of the speaking skill naturally leads to the subject of fluency. Can fluency in the target language be set as a realistic goal for FLES programs? Native-like fluency was one of the goals set by earlier FLES programs. That this goal was not met is not surprising, given the time constraints placed upon such plans. How can a child become fluent in a language that he is only exposed to for a few minutes a day at best? Surely, fluency has its place in immersion and bilingual programs but is not a realistic goal for the type of FLES program under discussion here. The proficiency goals of the 1980's are not as ambitious as those of the 1960's. Rhodes and Snow reported in the March 1984 ERIC/CLL News Bulletin that the new "FLES programs emphasize oral communication and set more precise goals than their forerunners in the 1960's."

In recent language learning research, much has also been written about "delayed oral response." In 1965, Belasco

referred to aural comprehension as the "...most underestimated⁹ and least understood aspect of foreign language learning." Postovsky conducted a study in 1969-70 to determine whether intensive oral practice does produce better language learners. He claimed that "...intensive oral practice is not productive in the initial phase of instruction and should be delayed until the student is better prepared for the task, that is until he has learned to understand the spoken language."¹⁰

Donoghue described young children as "...intrigued by words. They are naturally curious about language and they make up new words and use old ones in new combinations." She continued, "They are eager to learn new words and use them¹¹ regardless of the language in which they are expressed." Generally speaking, children in the first three grade levels of elementary school can be described as natural "mimics," but it has been this teacher's experience that although this applies to most children, there are exceptions.. A "non-verbal" child finds it uncomfortable to respond verbally. This child presents a particular challenge for the FLES teacher. She must be sensitive to this possibility. There is no harm in waiting for the child to volunteer to speak. The anonymity that speaking another language creates, especially if the teacher calls the children by their target language names, usually leads to oral response.

As with listening activities, speaking activities should

center on the "here and now" interests of the children. The file cards are again an excellent source for topics of conversation. Uninteresting dialogues that are forced into memory have no place in this curriculum. Any contrived and artificial conversation of the ALM variety is soon forgotten. Children are eager to bring in photos of themselves, their pets, and families. These serve as a stimulus for natural conversation. The teacher can initiate such discussion by bringing in a photo of her own family or pet and discussing it in the target language. This works particularly well with this age group because the children are naturally curious about their teacher.

Nonsense rhymes, poems, and songs are also appropriate means of practicing speaking skills. They are used often in the regular language class and certainly have a place in second-language instruction. These activities should be chosen carefully and judged on their cultural content as well. It is best to seek out those poems, rhymes, and songs that might be learned by children in the target culture. Translations of American poems, rhymes, and songs are not as desirable. Items that are truly learned in the target culture can then be vehicles of teaching the culture itself. Recordings of songs ought to be done by native singers so that the children can be exposed to yet another variant of language.

Children love to hear themselves. An interesting project would be to tape the children's voices and play the tape for the class. Children enjoy guessing whose voice they are hearing. They often are surprised at how proficient they sound. Parents also enjoy hearing their children's voices. Some students who might not otherwise participate in class feel quite comfortable with the recorder.

Error correction is a very important topic to consider in a discussion of speaking skills and the young learner. Recent research on error analysis has yielded insights into the language acquisition process that have produced major changes in teaching practices. Errors are now considered an inevitable part of the language learning process. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen reported that "...the advent of generative linguistics in the sixties brought with it a focus on the systematic developing constructions apparent in all children's speech as they learn their first language."¹² They further found that a majority of errors made in second language acquisition by young learners were developmental rather than interlingual, that is, those errors accounted for by interference between the native language and L₂. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen also reported on a sort of "transitional grammar," defined as interim language forms used by learners while learning L₂. Errors, then, are actually indicators of progress rather than failures. If this assumption is valid,

it is no longer essential nor perhaps even desirable, to correct all errors. Of course, the correct form is always presented, but the teacher need not concern herself if a child makes an error unless it is a "global" error which totally hampers communication.

Young children tend to feel more at ease in an environment where they know that they are free to make mistakes and will not be made to repeat a phrase until it is correct. Those children who might not normally speak might be more inclined to volunteer in this type of accepting environment.

Reading

Some foreign language educators might argue that reading has no place in the curriculum of the younger language learner. Montessori observed that given the proper rich language environment, children "explode" into both reading and writing. Surely, reading and writing are skills expected in the regular language arts class. If one considers the second language as yet another communication code, there is no reason why children learning a second language cannot learn to read and write concurrently while learning these skills in their mother tongue. Research has shown that the actual percentage of interference between the native language and L_2 is minimal. According to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, interference errors

account for only eight to twenty-three percent of all errors made in second language acquisition. Children have been found to make fewer mistakes than adults. Given the proper environment, children will naturally demand to see the written word and begin to read.

Labels can be made for classroom objects for which the vocabulary has already been mastered. In order to avoid confusion in those languages in which orthography differs significantly from pronunciation, it is extremely important that pronunciation be mastered before the written form is introduced. Children take a label and find the object and proudly read the word aloud. Another excellent individual or class project is to make a second language dictionary. Pictures are cut out of magazines and the children paste the correct label next to each picture. Work sheets that have pictures of objects and words that must be matched by drawing a line one to the other are important reading readiness activities.

Once a good working vocabulary of nouns is mastered, "action words" should be introduced. The teacher can color-code flash cards. Subjects can be written in black, action words in red, and completers in blue. The teacher can ask a question and invite the children to come up to the desk, and by arranging the cards in reply to the question, they then read the answer to the class. Not only are the children

attempting to read, they are unconsciously learning word order by fixing the color scheme in their minds. Reverse order for the interrogative as well as the form of the negative can be visually taught by using the color-coded cards.

Sorting activities are appropriate for this age level. Scrambling labels for nouns and other labels for articles, and having the children sort and match noun to article is a valid reading activity and a review of gender and number rules in the Romance languages.

Children love to color. Their small-muscle control is not quite refined; the teacher must be aware of this and provide activities with large areas to color. Coloring pages which have numbers coded to color words are an excellent way to reinforce these items. This type of activity is standard procedure in the regular classroom.

In order to practice response to interrogative sentence structure, cards with "yes" or "no" written in the second language can be distributed to each child. The teacher begins a conversation asking the children questions about a picture or story they have discussed. If the answer is yes they hold up the "yes" card, if no they hold up the "no" card. This is a useful reading and listening exercise and the teacher receives immediate feedback.

Any activity that involves some kind of manipulation is excellent. Sorting, cutting, pasting, matching, and coloring

must be an essential component of the reading readiness program in any language. Larew, a FLES expert and curriculum designer, wrote in 1976 that "As a foreign language teacher, I have been acutely aware that I would be a better one if I kept up with what is going on in the field of the teaching of reading."¹³ All of the activities described above are an essential part of the regular reading program for the first three grades of elementary school.

Writing

The desire to write the second language will follow naturally from these reading activities. The teacher must be sensitive to the small-muscle development of her students. Not all students mature at the same rate. No doubt some will be better developed than others. After the children have mastered the labeling activity they performed in their reading activities, they might want to write the word next to the picture. Short paragraphs written with blank spaces in which a child supplies the correct word chosen from a word bank at the bottom of the page are fun for the children and give them a feeling of accomplishment. Before long the children will be composing short stories and paragraphs on their own initiative. Children at this age need to please, so a teacher should not be too critical in correcting grammar errors of which there will be many. Providing the class with

dictionaries will help with writing and spelling skills if time is taken to explain how to use a foreign language dictionary. Dictionary skills are taught as part of the regular curriculum.

Of course, not all children will "explode" into reading and writing at the same time. As the regular classroom teacher must be sensitive to the individual learning stages of her students, so too must the second language teacher. If a child is ready to read and write, he or she must be encouraged.

Culture

The cultural component of language instruction ought to be totally integrated with the four other skills. If the children are listening to a folk tale, it should be an authentic tale from the country whose language is being studied. The same applies to songs and games. Native informants are a valuable source of information. If a picture is used to stimulate a conversation, it should be a picture depicting those people or their way of life. Foreign language magazines are good sources of visuals.

A unit on foods is an excellent vehicle for the teaching of culture as well as for reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The class can be presented with a recipe for some speciality of the country whose language they are studying.

All ingredients should be provided and equipment should be on hand. Of course, sampling the finished product is a treat.

The young learner is naturally curious about other people. A FLES teacher can capitalize on this curiosity to foster a cultural awareness. It is appropriate to emphasize that the children whose language they are learning like very much the same things that they themselves do. They love McDonald's, saw E.T., are learning computers, want the same toys for Christmas. Foreign magazine ads are a good way of visually displaying this fact.

Aside from integrating culture into the daily lesson, special blocks of time can be set aside for cultural enrichment. Special language fairs, fiestas, fêtes, etc., can be planned to celebrate various holidays of the other country. These activities can include the participation of the entire school. Field trips to art museums, restaurants, movies, theatre productions, and slide presentations are also excellent for cementing the interrelationship between cultures and creating intercultural understanding.

In the past few years, experimentation has been done using computers and video discs to teach culture. No one questions the use of the computer for drill and practice of vocabulary and grammar, but perhaps the true value of the computer in the future of language instruction lies in its ability to simulate cultural experience.

A group of foreign language teachers and computer experts are working at Brigham Young University on an interactive program for computer and video disc. Their program is called "Montevidisco."¹⁴ It is written in Spanish but the idea can apply to any language. The basic format of the program is: show, freeze, choose, and branch. The student watches a situation filmed in a foreign country with native speakers. A question is raised. The film freezes and the student turns to the computer to see the options available to him in this situation. The student enters his choice and watches the monitor as a "surrogate student" continues that segment of the video using the correct form of the response. The student compares his answer to the one on the screen. There are numerous branching possibilities and feedback is immediate. Both male and female "surrogate students" have been filmed so that the correct gender and cultural references are covered. This is a creative way to present cultural assimilators, mini-dramas, culture capsules, and clusters. The student is placed in a particular situation and must make a choice. He then witnesses the result of that choice. This type of program is time-consuming and costly but does represent an innovative approach to the teaching of culture.

In reviewing these FLES curriculum guidelines, it can be seen that the activities recommended for the five basic language skills overlap: listening with speaking, reading

with writing, and culture as a continuing thread woven into and joining each of the other skills. The strength of this program, then, is the interdependence of all five skills. This is important because any plan using these guidelines will appeal in some aspect to each student's individual learning style and ability.

These findings are by no means intended to be a definitive and comprehensive treatment of the subject area. This chapter has been limited to suggestions for second language curriculum planning in the first three grades of elementary school. Using and expanding on these guidelines, teachers can adapt their language lessons and units to meet their own learning situations.

NOTES

¹

For editorial reasons teacher will be referred to as she in this discussion.

²

Nancy Rhodes, et al. Elementary School Foreign Language Instruction in the United States: Innovative Approaches for the 1980's (Washington, D. C.: Department of Education, 1981), p. 42.

³

Paul Simon, The Tongue-Tied American: Confronting the Foreign Language Crisis (New York: The Continuum Publishing Co., 1980).

⁴

Marjorie Johnston, ed. Modern Foreign Languages in the High School (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962), in Theodore Andersson, Foreign Languages in the Elementary School: A Struggle Against Mediocrity (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p. 34.

⁵

Virginia Garibaldi Allen, "Foreign Languages in the Elementary School: A New Look: A New Focus," Language Arts, Vol. 55 (1978), 149.

⁶

Heidi Dulay, Marina Burt, and Stephen Krashen, Language Two (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 93.

⁷

Robert W. Blair, ed. Innovative Approaches to Language Teaching (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1982), p. 54.

⁸
Nancy Rhodes and Marguerite Snow, "Foreign Language in the Elementary School: A Comparison of Achievement," ERIC/CLL News Bulletin, Vol. 7 (1984), 3.

⁹
Blair, p. 68.

¹⁰
Blair, p. 69.

¹¹
Mildred Donoghue, Foreign Language and the Elementary School Child (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown, 1968), p.13.

¹²
Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, p. 173.

¹³
Leonor A. Larew, "Reading Readiness Activities for FLES," Hispania, Vol. 59 (1976), 893.

¹⁴
See Constance E. Putnam, "Foreign Language Instructional Technology: The State of the Art," CALICO Journal, Vol. 1 (1983), 38-39.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding chapters, the FLES movement in the United States has been examined in some detail. Research findings have led us to conclude that a revitalization of FLES programs is justified. The Center for Applied Linguistics' 1981 report has proven that there is indeed a strong interest on the part of educators, school officials, and parents to revitalize the FLES programs of the 1960's so that they meet the needs of the 1980's.

In light of the problems faced by FLES programs in the past, the following conclusions are made so that the future success of FLES programs will be insured:

1. Colleges and universities must be encouraged to institute methods courses to prepare those foreign language specialists who are interested in teaching in elementary foreign language programs.

2. Standardized textbooks, workbooks, and teacher guides must be

designed to meet the needs of FLES students especially those in the first three levels of elementary school. Textbook companies must be encouraged to invest in the publication of texts which relate to the guidelines described in the fourth chapter of this thesis.

3. Research must be conducted to pinpoint the exact benefits of early language learning so that FLES programs can capitalize on these.

4. Second language instruction should become an integral part of the regular language arts program.

5. Long-range plans must be made to accommodate the needs of FLES graduates when they reach the junior and senior high levels.

We are living in an age where international communication is

essential. If the United States intends to maintain its position as a political, social, and economic power, we can no longer afford to remain monolingual. Multicultural education is one key to our survival. We must look to elementary foreign language programs to meet this need. Many communities are proving that FLES can be a success.

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APPENDIX

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Name

Grade (1982-3)

Birthdate

Absence

Class A. M. P.M.

Any previous exposure to French Yes No

1. Listening

A. Active Commands Total Physical Response

Oui Non Ecoutez bien Merci S'il vous plaît

Levez-vous Asseyez-vous

B. Audio Discrimination

Point to the correct number which will be repeated
two times.

3 6 11 18 20 22 32 47 50

2. Speaking

A. Natural Speech - simple comprehension and appropriate
response

Comment vous appelez-vous?

Combien de personnes y a-t-il dans votre famille?

- B. Rote - child is asked to recall those skills that were drilled

Les Jours de la Semaine - poem that was memorized

Song - D'où venez vous Perrine?

Play first verse and invite child to sing along.

3. Reading

- A. Recognition of simple words

la mère	la maison
le père	la fille
la soeur	le garçon
le bébé	le stylo
le drapeau	le chien

- B. Reading sentences

Ask child to read "Ma Famille"

- C. Color Recognition Paper

Ask child to read the color word and mark the circle with the correct color.

4. Writing - it is not appropriate to evaluate this skill.

5. Cultural

Child is asked to identify two things:

The Map of France

La Tour Eiffel

3

6

11

18

20

22

32

47

50

AUDIO DISCRIMINATION

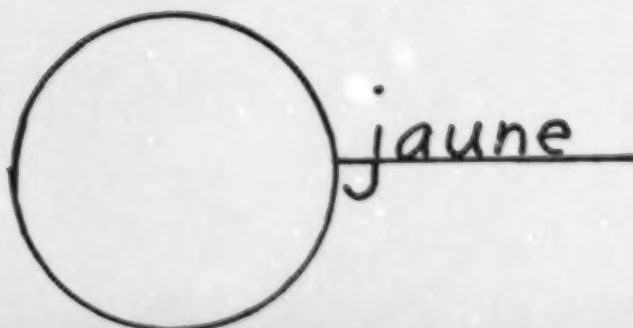
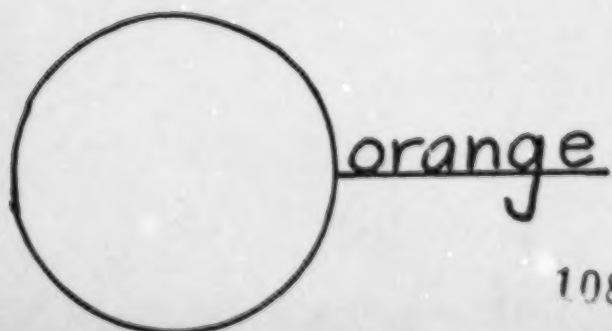
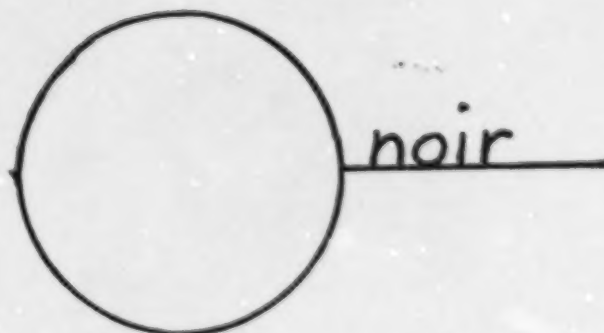
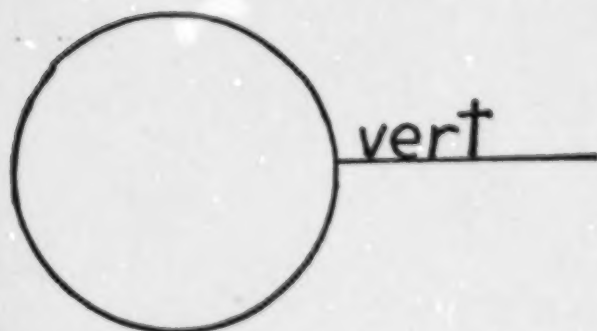
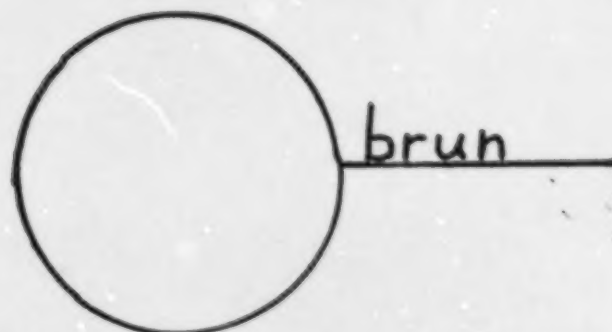
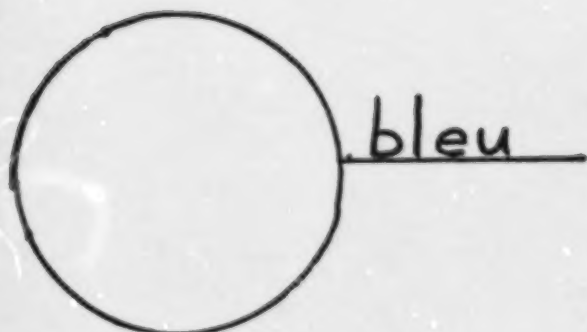
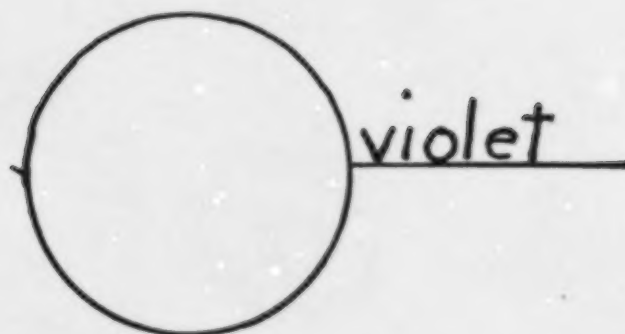
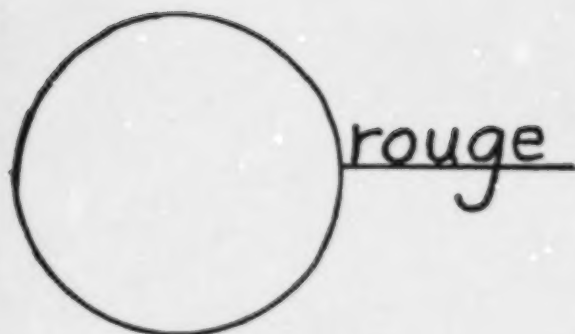
WORD RECOGNITION

la mère
le père
la soeur
le bébé
le drapeau
la maison
la fille
le garçon
le stylo
le chien

MA FAMILLE

Il y a six
personnes dans
ma famille. Le père
s'appelle John. La
mère s'appelle
Marie. Il y a trois
soeurs. Il y a
un frère.

COLOR RECOGNITION



VISUAL 1



.VISUAL 2



VITA

Emily Murphy was born on October 19, 1946, in Brooklyn, New York. She was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in April, 1967 and received a Bachelor of Arts in French and Education from Hunter College, New York, in 1968. She has taught French in FLES programs in Monroe, Connecticut and in Fairfax County, Virginia. Her FLES Bibliography has been accepted for publication by the Center for Applied Linguistics. In the spring of 1984, she received a graduate fellowship at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, and was awarded a Master of Arts in French from that institution in 1984.